

Living by degrees



Kristin Conard says goodbye to some new friends

Two of my housemates are leaving tomorrow. And not the two that I'd like to leave. I didn't know any of the people I was to live with when I moved in. For all of us, it's just a place to live for the summer before we go back to university. And I must admit that of all six of my housemates, the two that are leaving are not the ones I'd like to see leave.

Sometimes I wish my life was like *Big Brother* and I could evict people. I'd go into more, but I told them I was writing this column so I'll just let each assume I want one of the others to leave. Oh forget it. I'd like the one who has noisy sex in our bathroom at 2am to go. No-one should ever have to wake up to the sound of skin squeaking against a bathtub and then not be able to go back to sleep as the sound goes on for what seems like hours. And then there's the one who drank my margarita mix after a night out. He'd been on pills or something and apparently thought my 15.5 per cent alcohol mixer was juice and drank the whole bottle in one night. Genius.

No, instead of these two, there are two perfectly nice non-bathroom-sex, non-margarita-mix-stealing housemates leaving. One of them is off to travel through Europe by train for a month. She's starting in Paris, going up, down, around and ending up in Spain. The other is off to the sunny Canary Islands to work and surf, but mostly surf. Nothing to worry about except for the next restaurant or the next hotel or the next cocktail to have on the warm, sandy beach.

And here I am in Brighton. Where, ironically enough, it's not bright at all here right now. Cloudy and rainy most of the time. Yet I still head down to the beach every day it's not raining, desperately hoping that the clouds will clear and the sun will burn my pasty white legs. This is apparently the hope of many people here in Brighton. I love that even on a cloudy day when it's too cold to wear anything but trousers with a sweater there are people on the beach. There we are, trying not to shiver, white limbs turning blue instead of tan, trying to adjust ourselves so there's not a rock up our *bum or digging into our skull, hoping we don't get pooped on by a seagull.*

This was exactly how I spent the day before my housemates left. Pretending to read a book on the beach when really I was thinking about the soon to be loss of my friends. I'm going to miss them. They were my housemates for the summer; I have only known them for two months, but I'm going to miss them. University is such a crazy time when you think about it. You come to a new place, you meet new people, you fit into a new lifestyle but none of it is permanent. In a few years, it'll all be over and everyone will go a different way.

At this point on the beach I've moved from philosophical to sappy, the sun still isn't out and I don't want to work myself into a sobbing fit. So I get up and head home. Everyone is in the kitchen making their dinner. I smile at them all, even drink-stealer and sex-man. Everything seems normal and fine. And I realise that everything is. Even though they're leaving, it's still going to be OK. That's what this time of our life is for. Meeting new people, going to new places, making a junkie student house a home in only two months, saying hello and saying goodbye.